

Cleaning up by Idrab

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Summary: They left Billy unconscious in the Byers' house to go burn the tunnels, but what happened when he woke up? Drugged and alone in a stranger's house, trying to figure out what the hell just happened.

Cleaning up

Billy wakes up with a groan. Everything is bright, too bright, even with his eyes still closed. There is a weird humming noise surrounding him, and he doesn't know if it's real or not.

It suddenly stops, though, and he is grateful for it. It's dark again, too; dark enough that he cracks his eyes open – and immediately slams them shut again, because *ow*.

It hurts.

He slowly opens his eyes again, more prepared this time, and is looking up at a white ceiling. When he adjusts to the – admittedly pretty dim – light in the room, he turns his head slightly to the side to see where he is, and almost throws up. He clamps his mouth shut and breathes through his nose until the urge to vomit lessens, and carefully lifts his hand to his face.

He is on his back on the floor, his face is throbbing and he feels as if he's high and hungover and underwater, all at the same time. It could be a concussion, but it doesn't feel like a concussion, not really. He must have done something particularly stupid to get a beating this bad, and he should probably be worried that he can't remember what it was, but ... That's not important right now. What's important is that he has to get up. *Get up*.

Getting up is easier said than done, when his limbs feel like they're made out of iron and the floor is a giant magnet. He rolls over to the side and seriously contemplates just blacking out right there, but eventually he takes a deep breath, braces his hand on the floor and tries to push himself up into a sitting position.

The room tilts, black creeps into his vision and he is only dimly aware of a throbbing in his head and neck before he finds himself back on the floor, with his forehead pressed to the floorboards and with fingers scratching at the wood as if trying to hold on to something.

He touches his neck with a shaking hand and winces when it hurts,

and suddenly remembers pulling a ... syringe, what the hell? ... out of there earlier. Did that happen, or is he making up things after a blow to the head?

Frowning, he tries to sit up again. This time he's a little more successful, as in that he manages to drag himself up and lean against the closest wall, legs sprawled out in front of him. From this position he gets a clearer view of the house, and while he doesn't recognize anything at first – and he distantly feels like this should maybe be more worrisome – his gaze lands on the papers strewn about the floor and something moves in the back of his head.

He tries to chase that thought, and it feels like trying to run through mud, but eventually it clicks. The Byers' house. He drove here. Because Max–

He was supposed to get Max and bring her home. But he didn't, so he got punished for it. That's why he's hurting, that makes sense. He should–

No. Wait.

Harrington.

Billy scrunches his eyes shut and makes a face as he remembers. Harrington had been here. And Max, and those kids. Something was very ... wrong, and Billy was very angry. And when Billy gets angry, someone gets hurt; and if Neil is around that someone is usually Billy but he remembers pain in his knuckles as he hit someone else and *oh god what if he hit Neil, Neil's gonna kill him–*

He takes a shuddering breath and tries push down the panic rising in his throat. Neil couldn't have been here, there was only him and Max and those kids and Harrington, and the face underneath his knuckles had been Harrington's, so Harrington was probably the one who hit him.

Harrington had thrown the first punch, he suddenly remembers. The first couple of punches, actually. Because Billy had been ... oh yeah, the Sinclair kid.

Max had been here, and those kids, and the Sinclair kid. And Harrington. And Billy had warned Sinclair off, and gotten a knee to the groin – *ow* – and Harrington had punched him and Billy had broken a plate over Harrington's head and continued to beat him until he died.

Wait. Did he kill Harrington?

He looks around on the floor – and the world swims around him – but he doesn't see a trace of another person, or a dead body, and that is at least a relief. He remembers his fingers closing around a syringe that was just lodged in his neck, remembers dropping it, remembers Harrington groaning (*alive!*) behind him. Max had been shouting at him, and Billy should be angry at that but right now anger means pain and he doesn't want to deal with it. There was a bat?

What?

He closes his eyes again, to ... make sense of things, maybe? It doesn't work. A while later he opens his eyes and realizes that he doesn't know how long time has passed. Realizes that he doesn't actually know what happened. Realizes that he doesn't care.

He should clean up this mess.

No, wait. This isn't his house, this isn't his mess, and Neil isn't expecting him to clean it up.

He's alone in a stranger's house, and Neil is expecting him to bring Max home. Max isn't here, though. No one is here but Billy.

Billy should go home.

It takes a couple of tries, but he eventually finds himself standing up, leaning heavily on the wall. Everything is spinning, the few soft lamps that are still turned on makes his head hurt, and when he looks down he feels as if his feet are very, very far away from his body. He doesn't really believe that he'll be able to move, but he surprises himself by taking a few steps before falling back to the wall. He doesn't fall to the floor though, which –

Billy counts it as a win.

He should go home. But that will mean facing Neil when he has failed to do what he was supposed to do; will mean punishment that he's not ready for. He feels anger bubble right under his skin, and he also feels close to tears, but he doesn't have any energy for either of those things right now if he wants to get out of here, so he pushes those feelings down and locks them away to be dealt with later, or never. Preferably never.

Not feeling, that's the key.

Looking around, Billy frowns. The house is a mess; there's papers and drawings everywhere, blood on some of them, and from what he can see in the kitchen there's a chair pushed over and plates (whole and broken ones) and jars and stuff on the floor.

He should clean up this mess.

He pushes some of the papers on the floor with his foot while holding himself upright with a hand on the wall.

It's not his house, it's not his mess, Neil won't expect him to clean it up. He won't get shit later for not cleaning it up. Right?

But.

Billy didn't bring Max home, so he will be punished for it. And afterwards, like always, he'll be expected to clean up. He might as well do it now.

Also there's no one here but Billy.

So Billy should clean up this mess, to avoid further punishment (which he will face anyway, when he gets home, and he should actually go home but he suddenly *really doesn't want to*).

He pushes papers together into a pile on the floor and he rights a lamp that was lying down on a table. Some books have fallen from a bookcase and he painstakingly gets down on his knees to reach them while knowing that he's not going to get up again any time soon.

But from his position on the floor, it's easier to scoop up the papers, and he thinks – through the concussion or the haze of whatever was

in that syringe or whatever it is that makes him unable to form a coherent thought – that it's probably a good thing that no one else is here to see him crawl on his hands and knees into the kitchen, where he begins to pick up broken pieces of plates and glasses.

This isn't the first time he's done this, but it is the first time he's done it in someone else's home, so it takes longer as he doesn't know where things belong.

His hands are shaking and the world is still tilting slightly, but he continues to pick up the items strewn about and puts everything on the kitchen table, which he also uses to heave himself up when he has finished (it takes four tries before he's standing up again, on shaky, shaky legs). He finds a trash can where he throws away what's broken, and the things that aren't broken he puts in a neat pile in the middle of the table. The drawings are in another pile – a big pile, and he hasn't even started collecting the ones on the walls yet, or on the floor outside the kitchen – and some jars look like they belong in the fridge.

He takes two of them only, because he is unsteady on his feet and doesn't want to drop them (because they will break and if he breaks more things Neil will be angry – and he has to constantly remind himself *that this isn't Neil's house*, but knowing that doesn't make him feel any better), and then opens the fridge to put them in and makes a noise of dismay when even *more* things fall out and onto the floor, because he's not actually sure that he will be able to get up again if he has to get down on his knees again.

Then he gets a closer look at what fell out, and all his jumbled thoughts come to a halt.

Through the confusion as to what happened here, the pain in his head, the worry about Neil, the knowledge that he fucked up somehow, the effort of not succumbing to either anger or despair, and the numb feeling in his limbs, one single thing pushes through in his mind with enough strength that he finds himself saying the words out loud:

"What the fuck."